

Caltrans Streamlining Strategies



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TEA 21

- **Provides for Streamlining via Cooperative Efforts**
- **Did not Change Environmental Laws**
- **Did not Change Federal Transportation or Regulatory Agency Regulations and Practices**
- **Environmental Requirements Will Not Get Easier**

Cultural Differences

- **Transportation and Resource Agency Staff**
 - **Have Different Histories, Experiences**
 - **Do Not Share Common Language and Terminology**
 - **Respond to Different Constituencies**
 - **Do not have the same missions**

Conflicting Missions

- **CALTRANS, “Caltrans improves mobility across California”**
- **USFWS, “work with other to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people”**
- **USEPA, “protect human health and safeguard the natural environment-air,water, and long-upon which life depends”**
- **DFG, “manage California’s diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for the use and enjoyment by the public”**

Tackling Cultural Differences

- **Fully and Clearly Explained and Documented Project Purpose and Need**
- **Honest and Open Disclosure of Potential Impacts**
- **Recognize and Meet Partner and Resource Agencies' Needs (e.g. Alternatives Which Avoid/Minimize Impacts, enhance if possible)**
- **Cross-Functional Training, Interagency Rotational Assignments**

Relations with Resource Agencies

- **Involve Resource Agencies at Project Initiation**
- **Manage MOUs--Continuously Improve**
- **Ensure all Parties Understand MOU Intent, Provisions, Responsibilities**
- **Ensure Participating Staff Are Empowered to Make Decisions**
- **Good Project Scopes and Schedules**

Addressing Resource Issues

- **Provide Resource and Regulatory Agencies with Staff to Deal With Expanding Transportation Program**
- **Revise Project Thresholds to Focus MOU Activities on Significant Projects**
- **Reduce Re-Visiting Design, R/W and Environmental Decisions**
- **Increase Efficiency of Interagency Meetings**

Coinciding Missions

- **All Parties Must Acknowledge Validity of Public's Desire for Mobility AND Environmental Quality**
- **Identify Transportation AND Community and Environmental Elements in Project Purpose and Need**
- **Allow Resource Agencies to be True Stakeholders and Partners In Project Delivery**

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

EXTERNAL:

- **Providing Staff/Resources to Resource Agencies**
 - Main thrust to ensure early consultation
 - Inter-Agency Agreements (IA)
 - MOU's for roles/responsibilities, project priorities, performance measures, dispute resolution

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

- U.S.FWS, U.S.EPA, NMFS, U.S.Army Corps of Engineers, CCC, CaDFG and SHPO
- 20 positions being evaluated, if successful planning for more.
- **Interagency Partnering**
 - Implementation of a Tri-Agency Partnership
 - Resources Agency, BTH & CalEPA
 - Goal-Streamline trans projects without compromising the environmental process

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

- **CT/Federal Resource Agencies Partnering Effort Planned**
- **Development of MOU for NEPA/404 Integration process w/ FHWA, U.S.EPA, U.S. Corps. Issues pertaining to waters of the U.S.**
- **Training/staff development with Resources**
- **Caltrans involved in Biodiversity Council, Resource's fish passage work group**

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

- **Caltrans Agency Liaison Positions**
 - **Two in-house agency liaison positions-CCC and ACOE (SF)**
 - **Facilitate agency review of Caltrans projects**
 - **Guidance to CT staff regarding Agency information needs**
 - **Approach has been successful-considering more**

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

- **Programmatic Approaches-** establish agreed upon procedures and applicability to level of effect on the resources. Examples include:
 - CT/U.S.FWS covering early and continuous coordination
 - CT/U.S.FWS-Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle
 - CT/DFG- Desert Tortoise/Mojave Ground Squirrel
 - CT/FHWA,ACOE,EPA,FWS, DFG-Early Mitigation Planning
 - Additional, including Salmonids, Kit-Fox, Section 106, etc.
 - Individual District MOU's for specific work

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

- **INTERNAL**
- **Implementation of “Change Control Policy”**
 - **Advance environmental input into the planning process- Better scoping and scheduling**
 - **ID/avoid/minimize env. Impacts**
 - **Develop better assessments of cumulative impacts**
 - **Increase use of GIS technology/develop databases**
 - **“Locks in” project design**
 - **Obtain all information for permits during Env. studies**

Caltrans Streamlining Actions

Internal Cont:

- **Standard Environmental Reference**
- **Standard Formats for Env. Docs.**
- **Increase quality of Documents-Bio, etc.**
- **Caltrans organizational changes**
- **“Focused” Environmental Documents**
- **Mitigation Banking and Process Improvements**

Summary

- **Recognize difference in perspective/missions of the participants**
- **Involve resource agencies early as possible**
 - **provide resources if needed**
- **Make resource agencies true stakeholders and partners in your project**
- **Consider environmental betterments and enhancements**